

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 IO-14 AID-20 NIC-01 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /144 W

----- 089375

R 140050Z MAR 74

FM AMCONSUL UDORN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 138

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

CG USSAG NAKHON PHANOM

CO 56 SOW NAKHON PHAKOM

CG 13 ADVON (MESSENGER)

C O N F I D E N T I A L UDORN 69

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, TH, LA

SUBJECT: COMMUNISTS IN LAOS REPORTEDLY FIRE ON THAI BOATS ON  
MEKONG RIVER

REFERENCE: VIENTIANE 1819

1. SUMMARY: THAI MEKONG RIVER OPERATIONS UNIT (MRTU) COMMANDER  
REAR ADMIRAL DAMRONG SEKHANAN IN NAKHON PHANOM (NKP) MAR 11 SAID  
THAI BOATS IN LAST THREE MONTHS HAVE BEEN SHOT AT THREE TIMES BY  
NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY ON LAO SIDE OF MEKONG RIVER BORDER BETWEEN  
THAI PROVINCE OF NKP AND KHAMMOUANE PROVINCE IN LAOS. SINCE THEN,  
HOWEVER, THAI AND LAO HAVE WORKED OUT MODUS VIVENDI TO AVOID  
INCIDENTS, AND THAI INSTRUCTED NOT TO PROVOKE ANY. IN FEB THAI IN  
NKP SEIZED SEVERAL BATCHES OF U.S. ORIGIN ARMS AND AMMUNITION  
SMUGGLED FROM LAO SIDE. END SUMMARY.

2. DAMRONG SAID COMMUNIST TROOPS ON LAO SIDE OPPOSITE BAN PHAENG  
IN THAILAND FIRED ACROSS BOW OF THAI BOAT JAN 9, BUT BOAT NOT HIT  
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AND DID NOT RETURN FIRE.

3. ACCORDING DAMRONG, OTHER TWO INCIDENTS OCCURRED AFTER COM-

MUNISTS SEIZED MORE TERRITORY IN CLASH WITH ROYAL LAO GOVT FORCES NEAR PAK HIN BOUN JAN 29. ON FEB 15 COMMUNISTS AT PAK HIN BOUN OPPOSITE THA UTHEN FIRED CLOSE TO THAI BOAT WHICH AGAIN NOT HIT.

4. ON MAR 2 COMMUNISTS AT PAK HIN BOUN FIRED AND SHRAPNEL WOUNDED THAI GUNNER IN LEGS. THAI FIRED WARNING SHOTS BACK IN AIR.

5. AFTER THIRD INCIDENT, TASSENG (HEAD OF GROUP OF VILLAGES) FROM PAK HIN BOUN AREA CAME OVER TO THA UTHEN WITH LETTER FROM PATHET LAO TELLING THAI NOT TO TRAIN GUNS OR BINOCULARS ON LAO SIDE WHEN THEY PASSED. THAI AGREED TO THIS PROCEDURE TO AVOID FURTHER INCIDENTS. PL TOLD THAI THAT NVA, NOT PL, HAD FIRED ON THAI.

6. DAMRONG ADMITTED PROBLEM WAS THAT THAI BOATS IN SOME AREAS HAD TO TRAVEL IN LAO WATERS WHEN RIVER LOW AS IT IS NOW DURING DRY SEASON. HE REFERRED TO ORIGINAL TREATY BETWEEN THAI AND FRENCH WHICH DEMARCATES BORDER IN MAIN DEEP WATER CHANNEL BUT

GIVES ALL ISLANDS IN RIVER TO LAOS. DURING DRY SEASON THAI BOATS WITH LARGE DRAFT UNABLE TRAVEL BETWEEN ISLANDS AND THAI SIDE AND HAVE TO TRAVEL IN LAO WATERS BETWEEN ISLANDS AND LAO SIDE.

7. DAMRONG SAID THAT HE HAD RECEIVED ORDERS FROM BANGKOK NOT TO PROVOKE INCIDENTS AND HAD SO INSTRUCTED THAI RIVER CRAFT. NKP GOV WHICHIAN WETSAWAN TOLD US HE HAD ISSUED SIMILAR INSTRUCTIONS.

8. DAMRONG ADDED THAT TO AVOID INCIDENTS HE HAD ALTERED PATROL ROUTES OF RIPER BOATS. BEFORE INCIDENTS, BOATS FROM NKP TRAVELED UP RIVER PAST PAK HIN BOUN TO MOUTH OF CHAIYA (OR SONGKHRAM) RIVER WHERE THEY MET BOATS COMING DOWN FROM BAN PHAENG. SINCE INCIDENTS BOATS FROM NKP WENT UP ONLY AS FAR AS

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PAK HIN BOUN BOATS FROM BAN PHAENG WERE NOT YET COMING DOWN AS FAR AS PAK HIN BOUN SO THERE WAS GAPHTF SEVERAL KILOMETERS IN PATROL COVERAGE OF RIVER.

9. DAMRONG ALSO SAID COMMUNISTS IN LAOS HAD RECOILLESS RIFLES ON RIVER BANK POINTING AT THAI SIDE.

10. DAMRONG AND GOV REPORTED NVA MOVING FAMILIES IN TO SETTLE IN AREA BETWEEN PAK KADING AND PAK HIN BOUN AND ARE PROPAGANDIZING THAT THEY PLAN TO LIBERATE NORTHEAST THAILAND. AFTER JAN 29 CLASH IN LAOS, ABOUT 20 LAO FAMILIES FROM PAK HIN BOUN TOOK REFUGE IN THA UTHEN BUT HAVE SINCE BEEN SENT BACK TO AREA CONTROLLED BY RLG.

12. BESIDES FEB 17 SEIZURE NEAR NKP OF U.S. ORIGIN ARMS AND AMMUNITION SMUGGLED IN FROM LAOS, REPORTED UDORN 55 NOTAL, THAI I MUKDAHAN DISTRICT FEB 21 AND 22 SEIZED TWO MORE BATCHES, REPORTEDLY INCLUDING M-79 GRENADE LAUNCHERS AND M-16 AND M-3 AMMUNITION. WE ATTEMPTING OBTAIN SERIAL AND LOG NUMBERS. BROH-KAHN, GDS.

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## Message Attributes

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